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ACTION AF-00

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	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/006W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7172  
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 005352

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH  
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY  
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS  
ADDIS ABABA FOR LUKASAVICH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/05

TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR ZI ZANU PF

SUBJECT: ZANU-PF MODERATE WARNS OF CONSEQUENCES IF  
ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT PASSES

CLASSIFIED BY DCM EARL IRVING, REASON 1.5 (B), (D)  
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SUMMARY

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¶1. (C) SUMMARY: ON SEPTEMBER 21, DCM AND POLOFF CALLED ON NEWLY APPOINTED DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORTS, AND CULTURE AENEAS CHIGWEDERE. THE DEPUTY MINISTER, A RELIABLE EMBASSY INTERLOCUTOR IN HIS EARLIER POSITIONS, WAS CHARACTERISTICALLY FRANK IN HIS DISCUSSION OF ZANU-PF POLITICS AND HIS WARNING OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR ZIMBABWE IF THE U.S. CONGRESS PASSES THE ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT (ZDA). WHILE RECOGNIZING THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILINGS SINCE INDEPENDENCE, AND EVEN CALLING MUGABE A LIABILITY, CHIGWEDERE ARGUED THAT PASSAGE OF THE ZDA WOULD ONLY ACCELERATE CHAOS IN ZIMBABWE. ALTHOUGH WE SEE CHIGWEDERE AS A REALIST, ZIMBABWE HAS MUCH FARTHER TO FALL BEFORE HIS WORST CASE SCENARIO IS REALIZED. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) ON SEPTEMBER 21, DCM AND POLOFF CALLED ON NEWLY APPOINTED DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORTS, AND CULTURE AENEAS CHIGWEDERE. CHIGWEDERE, A SECOND-TERM MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, HAS BEEN A RELIABLE AND UNUSUALLY FRANK INTERLOCUTOR FOR THE EMBASSY. DCM CONGRATULATED CHIGWEDERE ON HIS APPOINTMENT, AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THE MINISTRY HAS AN ALL NEW LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING A NEW MINISTER AND PERMANENT SECRETARY. CHIGWEDERE WENT ON TO SAY BLUNTLY THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE HAD APPOINTED NEW BLOOD INTO THE MINISTRY TO IMPLEMENT REFORM, SINCE THE OLD LEADERSHIP WOULD HAVE JUST SLOWED THINGS DOWN.

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ZDA TO UNLEASH MILITARY RESPONSE?

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¶3. (C) THE DEPUTY MINISTER QUICKLY TURNED TO THE ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT (ZDA) CURRENTLY BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. (NOTE: THE ZDA, AS WRITTEN, WOULD END ALL BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO THE GOZ. HOWEVER, NEARLY ALL U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ZIMBABWE IS DISBURSED THROUGH NGOS AND WOULD BE EXEMPT. END NOTE.) DCM EXPLAINED THAT WE CANNOT PREDICT IF THE ZDA WILL PASS OR NOT. THE EXECUTIVE DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO TURN OFF THE BILL, BUT IF IT IS NOT ACTED UPON BEFORE CONGRESS IS DUE TO ADJOURN ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 6, THE ZDA WILL DIE IN COMMITTEE.

¶4. (C) CHIGWEDERE PREDICTED THAT IF THE ZDA DOES PASS, IT WILL LEAD TO AN ARMY TAKEOVER. WHEN ASKED TO EXPLAIN HOW THIS MIGHT HAPPEN, CHIGWEDERE SAID THE ZDA WOULD ACCELERATE ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMIC DECLINE AND LEAD TO

UNREST THAT WOULD FORCE THE ARMY TO INTERVENE.  
ZIMBABWEAN URBANITES WOULD NOT "LIFT A FINGER" TO OPPOSE  
THE MILITARY BECAUSE OF THE MEMORY OF THE RECENT  
ELECTIONS AND THE MATABELELAND MASSACRES OF THE 1980S,  
AND ZIMBABWE WOULD BE STUCK WITH A MILITARY GOVERNMENT  
FOR THREE TO FIVE YEARS. THERE IS NO DOUBT OF THE  
GOVERNMENT'S FAILURES SINCE INDEPENDENCE, CHIGWEDERE  
OPINED, BUT THE MILITARY, POLICE, AND WAR VETERANS WOULD  
NEVER PERMIT A GOVERNMENT THAT WAS NOT SYMPATHETIC TO  
THEIR CAUSE. CHIGWEDERE ADDED THAT THE MILITARY WOULD  
NEVER SUPPORT TSVANGIRAI AS PRESIDENT SHOULD HE COME TO  
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POWER IN SOME KIND OF POPULAR REVOLUTION, BUT WAS MORE  
VAGUE WHEN ASKED IF THE MILITARY WOULD SUPPORT A  
LEGITIMATELY ELECTED TSVANGIRAI.

NEW DEAL ON LAND?

15. (C) ON THE LAND ISSUE, CHIGWEDERE REPORTED THAT THE  
GOZ IS NEGOTIATING WITH THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION  
(CFU) THROUGH BACK CHANNELS TO OBTAIN SEVERAL HUNDRED  
FARMS AND TO PAY FOR THEM THROUGH A TRUST FUND. THE  
DEPUTY MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO IN TOUCH  
WITH THE BRITISH ON THIS ISSUE, AND CLAIMED THEY SUPPORT  
THE FACE-SAVING IDEA OF A DONOR-FUNDED TRUST FUND TO  
BREAK THE LAND REFORM IMPASSE. ZIMBABWE AND THE U.K.  
HAVE BEEN SO AT ODDS OVER LAND REFORM THAT NEITHER IS  
PUBLICLY WILLING TO SWALLOW THEIR PRIDE. CHIGWEDERE  
OFFERED THAT IT IS NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY TO EXPEL ALL  
WHITE FARMERS FROM THEIR LAND--THE MOST PRODUCTIVE FARMS  
IN MASHONALAND WOULD BE EXEMPTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT  
IS GOVERNMENT POLICY, HE STATED BLUNTLY, TO HARASS  
FARMERS INTO SURRENDERING LARGE TRACTS OF LAND BORDERING  
COMMUNAL AREAS BY PERMITTING COMMUNAL FARMERS TO CUT  
DOWN TREES, STEAL WIRE, OR OCCUPY THE LAND OUTRIGHT.

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MUGABE SEEN AS LIABILITY IN ZANU-PF

16. (C) CHIGWEDERE PROVIDED AN UNUSUALLY FRANK AND, IN  
OUR JUDGMENT, ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT STATE  
OF ZANU-PF POLITICS. HE FLAT-OUT STATED THAT MUGABE HAS  
BECOME A LIABILITY FOR THE PARTY, AND THE SOONER HE  
RETIRE, THE BETTER. IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM  
TO DO SO, HOWEVER, BECAUSE IT IS NOT IN THE AFRICAN  
TRADITION FOR CHIEFS TO SIMPLY STEP ASIDE AND BECOME  
"ORDINARY MEN." ONLY GOD CAN RETIRE A CHIEF, CHIGWEDERE  
ADDED. HOWEVER, MUGABE HAS BEEN MISLED BY HIS CIRCLE OF  
SYCOPANTS, WHO, AS IN ANOTHER AFRICAN TRADITION, ONLY  
WISH TO PLEASE THEIR CHIEF AND ARE LOATH TO SAY OR DO  
ANYTHING THAT WOULD UPSET HIM. THIS HAS LED TO AN IVORY  
TOWER SYNDROME IN WHICH MUGABE DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND  
THE DEPTH OF DISCONTENT IN THE COUNTRY. WHEN ASKED IF  
THERE IS ANYONE WHO COULD SUCCEED MUGABE, THE DEPUTY  
MINISTER SAID ONLY FINANCE MINISTER MAKONI WOULD COME

CLOSE TO FILLING HIS SHOES, AS MUGABE'S INNER CIRCLE HAD BEEN REJECTED BY THE PEOPLE IN THE JUNE 24-25 ELECTION. MAKONI, HOWEVER, DOES NOT HAVE A BROAD BASE OF SUPPORT SINCE MOST OF THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO ADVANCE IN THE PARTY. HE DID NOT SEE ANY GOOD PROSPECTS FOR YOUNG BLOOD TO FILTER UP THE PARTY HIERARCHY SO LONG AS THE OLD GUARD REMAIN FIRMLY ENTRENCHED.

17. (C) COMMENT: A COMMITTED AFRICANIST, CHIGWEDERE IS, IN ZANU-PF TERMS, SOMEONE WE WOULD DESCRIBE AS A MODERATE. UNLIKE MOST OF MUGABE'S CABINET, HE IS KNOWN

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FOR TELLING IT LIKE IT IS, BUT HIS PREDICTION THAT A MILITARY TAKEOVER IS IN THE WINGS IF THE ZDA PASSES IS FARFETCHED. HIS ARGUMENT CONTAINED FEW SPECIFICS, BUT PROBABLY REFLECTS A GROWING REALIZATION IN ZANU-PF THAT THE GOZ IS INCREASINGLY ISOLATED, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. WHAT LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT ZANU-PF'S LEADERSHIP HAS LEFT IS STEADILY ERODING, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PARTY. CHIGWEDERE'S APPEAL TO HALT PASSAGE OF THE ZDA BASED ON AN IMMINENT MILITARY COUP TRUMPETS ZANU-PF'S GROWING DESPERATION. IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT PASSAGE OF THE ZDA WOULD HAVE ANY PRACTICAL EFFECT ON ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY, BUT IT COULD BECOME A CONVENIENT SCAPEGOAT FOR THE GOZ'S OWN GROSS MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY. IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT MUGABE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE THE ACT BECOME LAW SO HE COULD ADD THE U.S. TO HIS LONG LIST OF EXCUSES FOR HIS OWN GOVERNMENT'S POOR PERFORMANCE. END COMMENT.

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